

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, MAY 21, 2001

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with the following members present: Bloomfield, Borys, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Wallace. Mr. Dale was absent.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 3 BEECHCREST LANE, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Daniel Young presented the staff report on this project that had been first heard as a preliminary design review at the previous HCB meeting on May 7, 2001. The Board had favorably received the proposal to construct a second garage and enclosed auto court, but expressed concern that the 6' high perimeter wall not block vistas through the neighborhood nor disturb the open spaces that flow between properties.

Mr. Young indicated that there were two principle design issues for the Board to consider: 1) the compatibility of the design and siting of a new garage and screen walls in the side yard east of the house and 2) the impact of a brick wall enclosing the rear and a portion of the side yard west of the house. In addition, he said that zoning variances will be required to 1) permit a second garage on site, 2) a garage in a side yard and 3) a garage height exceeding 12 ½ feet.

Mr. Young said that since the Board's preliminary review, the architect, Tom Jeckering, had redesigned the portion of garden wall west of the house. The new fence is now of wrought iron atop a 2' brick base, this to replace an existing chain link fence. Mr. Jeckering explained this new configuration would better maintain view lines into the site. He said that the new brick wall would be softened by extensive plantings throughout the site. In answer to Mr. Senhauser, Mr. Jeckering confirmed that the eastern wall at the driveway entry was now capped in slate to match the roof of the residence.

Ms. Sullebarger said she had visited the site and that the chain link fence presently in the rear yard allowed view through the lot. She said she thought a combination of wall and fencing could better provide the necessary screening without disrupting the flow of space between properties.

BOARD ACTION

By majority vote (motion by Bloomfield second by Kreider, Sullebarger opposed) the Board took the following actions:

1. Approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a second garage and garden wall at 3 Beechcrest Lane as shown in the plans dated 5/11/2001 on the condition that the new garden wall be constructed to have two identical "good" sides.
2. Approved variances to the requirements of the Zoning Code [1405-211(d) and 1469-121(a)] to permit the construction of a second garage, in the side yard, with a height exceeding 12 ½ feet, finding that granting such relief:
 - Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic, architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district, and
 - Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE,
515-519 MILTON STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report on this project that was first heard by the Board as a preliminary design review at its October 16, 2000 meeting.

Ms. Kellam introduced Donald Beck and Eric Puryear, architects, who presented a preliminary design for renovation of 515 Milton Street incorporating a new addition in the open lot between 515 and 521 Milton Street. Ms. Kellam said that no one had attended a pre-hearing conference; the Mt. Auburn Community Council had not responded to its notification. The Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association had met with Mr. Puryear and reviewed the plans; the Association's comments and concerns were summarized in a letter included with the Board package.

Mr. Puryear presented schematic plans and specifications for the proposed project that included some recent modifications. The overall composition of the addition's street façade is as originally proposed - a projecting garage bay linked to the existing house by a receding entry mass. The wrought iron fence at the entry has been shortened; the stairway window and entrance balcony have been eliminated. Streetside windows are now casements. The side and rear masonry is now painted brick to match the front facade. Mr. Puryear said the addition would not be highly visible from Corporation Alley.

Mr. Raser suggested the cornice did not have the mass of those on other district buildings. Mr. Beck responded that the proposed cornice was designed to suggest, not replicate, neighboring cornices (many of which were later alterations). Mr. Beck said that the owners would consider returning to the sash windows first proposed.

Ms. Borys said that the new addition continued the rhythm of the streetscape, but she was concerned about the massing and detail of the garage bay. She suggested that the window openings seemed undersized and awkwardly spaced and that the composition needs to be more appropriately proportioned.

Several residents of Prospect Hill appeared to address the Board.

Mr. Vernon Raider of 506 Milton Street complimented the architect for his work in the neighborhood, accepted the street oriented garage doors and recommended the project.

Doug Spitz of Milton Street said that he had been building houses in the City for seven years and that he thought the proposed addition was well conceived and a compliment to the neighborhood.

Sara Young owner of 513 Milton Street said the street-facing garage doors and steel staircase in the rear were inconsistent with the neighborhood. She suggested the Board table the application until neighbors had had an opportunity to review the plans further and to comment.

Ron Tisue whose Corporation Alley property shares a rear property line with 515 Milton said he had known of the addition earlier, but was not aware that it was to be so massive or so close to his rear lot line. He indicated that the rear elevation was extremely modern and would tower over his property. He was concerned about the large expanses of glass and industrial look of the steel staircase. Mr. Tisue said the addition would be highly visible from Corporation Alley. He also objected to the front facing garage doors, the spacing of the windows above the garage, the composition of the recessed link and the cornice.

Cynthia Tisue co-owner of the Corporation Alley residence, said that the proposed design lacked the classical design, proportion and materials of other district buildings. She also indicated that a large tree that shaded her yard would be lost and the stone wall at the rear property line could be threatened by the new construction.

Hal Rutledge and Anna Linden agreed with the Tissues and affirmed that the neighbors needed more time to review the proposal.

Les Bradford of 457 Milton Street said he had not had a chance to review the design, but was concerned that the addition would destroy a tree and eliminate one of the few open spaces on the street. He said he was concerned that the loss of the open space could result in drainage problems in the neighborhood. Mr. Bradford also objected to the meeting time and suggested that HCB meeting should be held in the evenings.

In answer to Mr. Raser, Don Beck confirmed that his clients owned the entire parcel and acknowledged that a water line in the previous public alley would need to be relocated.

Ms. Kellam said that the precise zoning variances were not known and that the final determination would be made by B&I based on site information not yet submitted. Mr. Senhauser confirmed that side and rear yard variances are not unusual in this neighborhood of small lots.

Mr. Bloomfield suggested the addition might be moved a few feet closer to the street in order to enlarge the rear yard. Mr. Beck responded that the addition had been set back to align with the front façade of 521 Milton Street to the east.

Mr. Senhauser read from the minutes of the October 16, 2000 preliminary review in which the Board suggested that the design could better unify the front and rear halves of the building. He asked the architect how this revised design addressed that concern. Mr. Beck responded that although the massing had not changed, the front façade had been simplified and the window and balcony removed from the connecting link. He said the cornice had been changed and all masonry was now brick.

Mr. Bloomfield suggested that the item be tabled to give the architect an opportunity to restudy the proportions of the garage wing, to explore options for minimizing the effect of the addition on the rear yard and to evaluate the impact of the large glass area on adjoining property owners. He said that he would like to see a site plan showing the project in the context of the neighborhood. Mr. Bloomfield said the project was a breath of fresh air and that the owners should be commended for their investment in the neighborhood.

BOARD ACTION

The Board unanimously voted (motion by Bloomfield second by Raser) to table the application to construct an addition to 515 Milton Street in order to give the applicant sufficient time to:

- Consider design changes to respond to the Board's concern for proportion, materials and details of the new addition as expressed at this hearing.
- Meet with residents of the neighborhood to discuss design changes that may make the project more acceptable to the community.
- Determine the exact variances to the Zoning Code that will be required to construct the addition as proposed.
- Provide additional graphics (including site plans) showing the relationship of this project to adjoining houses and their lots.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Forwood distributed maps prepared by Mr. Young delineating the boundaries of the City's National Register and locally designated historic districts.

Ms. Sullebarger reported that the Community Development & Intergovernmental Committee of City Council conducted a public hearing to discuss the City's building code requirements for older structures. Chairman DeWine has encouraged B&I to be more flexible in its interpretation of the code and may wish to consider a sub-code (as New Jersey's) to deal with historic properties. Mr. Senhauser emphasized that the current code already allows for equivalency.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned (motion by Sullebarger second by Spraul-Schmidt).

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date